

April 4, 2001

Administrator Christine Todd Whitman
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building (MC 1101A)
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Whitman:

On behalf of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT), I am pleased to forward the Council's Final Report and Recommendations regarding its evaluation of EPA's Workforce Assessment Project and Strategy for Human Capital. The development of this report was led by Ms. Dorothy Bowers. The NACEPT Council welcomes your review and response to this report.

Last Fall, the Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM) requested that NACEPT help the Agency evaluate its human resource planning efforts. The Deputy Administrator at that time was fully briefed and supported this work.

NACEPT endorses the concept of human resource planning, both as a means for meeting the internal needs of employees, and in order to fulfill the mission of the Agency. The report and recommendations can assist EPA in developing and implementing a comprehensive human resource strategy to ensure that its workforce is poised to support the Agency's mission in the future.

The Council believes that EPA is facing a human resource crisis of significant magnitude, yet the documents reviewed did not propose actions necessary to ameliorate the crisis. Nor do the the Agency's current human resource efforts equal those found at benchmark organizations in the private sector. The EPA Workforce Assessment document provides a view of where the Agency would like to be in 2020, but is devoid of a strategy and process to transform today's workforce into the desired workforce of the future.

Specifically, the Council recommends that EPA:

- Fully integrate the human resource plan and processes into the Agency's strategic planning process.
- Support is needed from the highest level of the Agency. EPA's priorities should integrate the human resource plan into its budgetary planning processes, allocate sufficient resources (dollars and FTE), and provide management support across the Agency.
- EPA should fully fund and continue the human resource planning process that began with the Workforce Assessment Project and the EPA Strategy for Human Capital which include the original tasks to:
 - Prepare an integrated, comprehensive workforce strategy with recommendations for recruiting, developing and maintaining needed competencies in the current and future workforces.

- Recommend a workforce planning process, with implementation guidelines that would be integral to the Agency's strategic planning process.

The Council has committed to providing further recommendations on broader integration issues, and as a part of its ongoing role as a visionary body, will identify emerging issues and trends facing EPA. The Council and I look forward to receiving your response and to working with you on your priorities for the Agency.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Rhodes, Jr.
Chair, NACEPT

Enclosure

cc: Eileen McGinnis, Chief of Staff
Tom Gibson, Associate Administrator, OPEI
David O'Connor, Acting Assistant Administrator/OARM
Jane Moore, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator/OARM
Daiva Balkus, Director OHROS/OARM
Kerry Weiss, Director EPA Institute Division/OARM
Gordon Schisler, Acting Director/OCER
David Ziegele, OPAA/OCFO
Mike Hamlin, Sr. Policy Analyst/OARM



United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of
The Administrator

EPA
April 2001

Office of Cooperative Environmental Management

**NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND TECHNOLOGY (NACEPT)**

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**EVALUATION OF EPA'S WORKFORCE ASSESSMENT
PROJECT AND STRATEGY FOR HUMAN CAPITAL**

April 2001

law Offices

HOLLAND & KNIGHT *LLP*

2099 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20006-6801

202-955-3000
FAX 202-955-5564
www.hkiaw.com

Atlanta	Northern Virginia
Boston	Orlando
Bradenton	Providence
Chicago	St. Petersburg
Fort Lauderdale	San Antonio
Jacksonville	San Francisco
Lakeland	Seattle
Los Angeles	Tallahassee
Melbourne	Tampa
Miami	Washington, D.C.
New York	West Palm Beach
Orlando	
Portland	
San Diego	
San Jose	
Seattle	
Tampa	
Washington, D.C.	
West Palm Beach	

ROBERT L. RHODES
202-457-5943

Internet Address:
rrhodes@hkiaw.com

April 5, 2001

Administrator Christine Todd Whitman
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building (MC . 1101A)
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Whitman:

On behalf of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT), I am pleased to forward the Council's Final Report and Recommendations regarding its evaluation of EPA's Workforce Assessment Project and Strategy for Human Capital. The development of this report was led by Ms. Dorothy Bowers. The NACEPT Council welcomes your review and response to this report.

Last Fall, the Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM) requested that NACEPT help the Agency evaluate its human resource planning efforts. The Deputy Administrator at that time was fully briefed and supported this work.

NACEPT endorses the concept of human resource planning, both as a means for meeting the internal needs of employees, and in order to fulfill the mission of the Agency. The report and recommendations can assist EPA in developing and implementing a comprehensive human resource strategy to ensure that its workforce is poised to support the Agency's mission in the future.

The Council believes that EPA is facing a human resource crisis of significant magnitude, yet the documents reviewed did not propose actions necessary to ameliorate the crisis. Nor do the Agency's current human resource efforts equal those found at benchmark organizations in the private sector. The EPA Workforce Assessment document provides a view of where the Agency would like to be in 2020, but is devoid of a strategy and process to transform today's workforce into the desired workforce of the future.

Specifically, the Council recommends that EPA:

- Give upper management support to this initiative. EPA's priorities should integrate the human resource plan into its budgetary planning processes, allocate sufficient resources (dollars and FTE), and provide management support across the Agency.

Administrator Christine Todd Whitman

April 5, 2001

Page 2

- Fully integrate the human resource plan and processes into the Agency's strategic planning process.
- Fully fund and continue the human resource planning process that began with the Workforce Assessment Project and the EPA Strategy for Human Capital which include the original tasks to:

Prepare an integrated, comprehensive workforce strategy with recommendations for recruiting, developing and maintaining needed competencies in the current and future workforces.

Recommend a workforce planning process, with implementation guidelines that would be integral to the Agency's strategic planning process.

The Council has committed to providing further recommendations on broader integration issues, and as a part of its ongoing role as a visionary body, will identify emerging issues and trends facing EPA. The Council and I look forward to receiving your response and to working with you on your priorities for the Agency.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Rhodes, Jr.
Chair, NACEPT

Enclosure

cc:- Eileen McGinnis, Chief of Staff
Tom Gibson, Associate Administrator, OPEI
David O'Connor, Acting Assistant Administrator/OARM
Jane Moore, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator/OARM
Daiva Balkus, Director OHROS/OARM
Kerry Weiss, Director EPA Institute Division/OARM
Gordon Schisler, Acting Director/OCEM
David. Ziegele, OPAA/OCFO
Mike Hamlin, Sr. Policy Analyst/OARM

NOTICE

This report and set of recommendations have been written as part of the activities of the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT), a public advisory committee providing extramural policy advice to the Environmental Protection Agency's Administrator and other officials of the EPA. The Council is structured to provide balanced and expert assessment of policy matters related to the effectiveness of the environmental programs of the United States. This report has not been reviewed for approval by the EPA and, hence, the contents of this report, *and* its recommendations, do not necessarily present the views and policies of the EPA, nor of other agencies in the Executive Branch of the federal government, nor does the mention of trade names, companies, or commercial products constitute a recommendation or endorsement for use.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. APPROACH	3
III. OBSERVATIONS	4
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS	9
ATTACHMENT A — Schedule of Meetings	11
ATTACHMENT B — NACEPT Workforce Capacity Workgroup Members	12
ATTACHMENT C — OARM Charge to NACEPT	13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the Fall 2000, the Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM) requested that the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT) help the Agency evaluate its human resource planning efforts. OARM developed a charge with a specific list of questions for NACEPT to consider while evaluating EPA's human resource planning efforts.

Specifically, the Agency asked NACEPT to review its human resource planning strategy outlined in EPA's Workforce Assessment Project (WAP) and Strategy for Human Capital. The two documents provide the reader with a clear understanding of EPA's current workforce demographics and the potential drivers facing the Agency in developing its workforce of the future.

In response to this request, the NACEPT Workforce Capacity Workgroup which consisted of NACEPT Council members was established. The Workgroup met several times between September 2000 and February 2001. The members dialogued with the OARM program managers on ways that the human resource planning efforts could be evaluated.

The Workgroup's progress was presented to the full NACEPT Council at the November 8-9, 2000 meeting. The Council forwarded interim findings to the Agency in December 2000 and to the Transition Team in January 2001. The report and recommendations was submitted to the EPA Administrator and program managers in April 2001. The Council's observations and recommendations are also found in Section II of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

*NACEPT strongly endorses the concept of **human** resource planning, both as a means of meeting the internal needs of employees, and in order to *fulfill* the mission of the Agency. Toward these ends, the following recommendations are made to assist EPA in developing and implementing a comprehensive human resource plan and continuing planning process, recognizing that both the plan and the process must be *fully* integrated into the Agency's strategic planning process.*

- **EPA should continue the human resource planning process** that was started with the Workforce Assessment Project and the EPA Strategy for Human Capital, and the original tasks (i.e., Task 5: create a workforce development strategy for recruitment and retention, and Task 6: integrate human resource planning and EPA's strategic planning) should be funded and completed.
- **The plan should incorporate more quantitative information**, with attention devoted to measures that will allow the Agency to develop and assess progress toward tangible goals. A "transformation" plan should be developed that defines the specific goals and, more importantly, the specific actions that the Agency needs to take to reach those goals.

- **The Agency is facing a human resource crisis of significant magnitude,** and the human resource plan must address the crisis and include actions necessary to ameliorate the crisis.
- **The human resource plan must address career planning and training.** As we noted, this will represent a significant commitment by the Agency to incur short-term costs for longer-term benefits.
- In support of the human resource plan and planning process, **EPA should collect, maintain, and archive human resource data** necessary for trends analysis and program assessment. This should include use of longitudinal files on individuals, a "mini-control group/panel," etc., so that linkages among employee perceptions, career development, and retention/longevity may be established and understood.
- Many of EPA's human resource goals and challenges center on issues that do not lend themselves to "hard" or objective measurement. Therefore, **EPA should use employee opinion surveys and similar "soft" measures** on a continuing basis to track employee perceptions, as well as the Agency's progress in meeting the needs and aspirations of its employees.
- **EPA must fully integrate its human resource planning into the Agency's overall strategic planning process,** so that there is full coordination between the funding, development, and implementation of human resource programs, and the development of the Agency's strategic goals and objectives. This will require significant support from the Administrator and the Agency's senior leadership.
- **The Agency must design and sustain a career development program** that emphasizes both formal training and broad experiential assignments as a prerequisite to employee advancement. Commitment to such a program starts with the Administrator as she insists on the concept of career development as an Agency-wide priority. This involves trade-offs between short-term costs and longer-term benefits that must be managed at the highest levels of the organization.
- **EPA should be aggressive in all of its programs to attract and retain the required personnel to achieve its mission.** As we noted in our observations, the Agency needs to be an advocate for competitive salaries that are specific to occupations and geographic locations.
 - **EPA needs to emphasize and build upon the high. calling of public service,** the cause of the environment, and the opportunity for employees to work on "big problems" and to make a difference.

EPA needs to catalogue the full range of programs being used by other Federal agencies. Specifically, the Agency should expand its partnerships with universities, and be innovative in the use of fellowships, grants, and contracts to expose graduate

students and faculty to issues related to environmental science and policy. Building awareness of environmental issues should start as early as elementary school.

- **EPA should take the lead within the Federal government in managing the upcoming retirement crisis,** so that institutional knowledge is maintained and transferred to more junior staff.
 - **EPA should be proactive in developing programs** to counter early retirements, such as a retention bonus for critical personnel.
 - **EPA should be innovative** in creating new ways to engage former employees, such as phased retirements.

**Evaluation of EPA's Human Resource Planning Efforts
Report and Recommendations
of the
National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology**

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT) is a public advisory committee originally chartered on July 7, 1988. The Council provides recommendations and advice to the Administrator and other EPA officials on ways to improve the development and implementation of domestic and international environmental management policies and programs. The NACEPT membership includes senior-level officials and experts representing federal, state, and local government agencies and tribal organizations, business/industry, academia, environmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. As principal constituents and stakeholders of EPA, these members provide advice and recommendations on policy issues/questions and serve as a sounding board for new strategies that the Agency is developing.

In the Fall 2000, the Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM) requested that NACEPT help the Agency evaluate its human resource planning efforts. Specifically NACEPT was asked to review EPA's human resource planning strategy outlined in EPA's Workforce Assessment Project (WAP) and Strategy for Human Capital. The two documents provide a clear understanding of EPA's current workforce demographics and the potential drivers facing the Agency in developing its workforce of the future. The Council's observations and recommendations are discussed in Section II of this report.

Not unlike other public sector agencies, EPA will be hard-pressed to attract and retain qualified staff members in a competitive job marketplace, while at the same time having to carry out its mission in an era where the public expects government to do more with less funding.

The federal government is under increasing pressure to be more accountable, more efficient, and less costly. This is clearly an outgrowth of experiments in privatization and economic efficiency that began in the mid 1990's in local governments and has now shifted towards several large state governments.

Many of the current competitive trends in public administration are already being addressed by private sector businesses. EPA's Workforce Assessment Project and Strategy for Human Capital show that privatization and outsourcing have not been given a sufficient level of consideration. While these documents are based on an assumption that EPA staff will be responsible for completion of all of these goals and objectives, there are numerous examples of agencies and functions once thought to be staffed and managed by public sector employees that have been turned over to private sector operators or employee teams working under long-term service agreements. Based on this trend, in the near future many federal agencies will be asked to

consider radical ideas in order to achieve their overall mission. Clearly, a "business as usual" attitude toward staffing federal agencies must change dramatically to respond to the imminent loss of key personnel as about half of the federal work force will be eligible to retire or take "early out" in the next five years.

Despite policy statements that "people are our most important asset," all too often are the one asset that is not strategically managed. Comprehensive human resource planning is an important task that deserves the attention of the Administrator and the senior leadership.

Fundamentally, all personnel systems must:

- Attract, retain and motivate personnel

Assign and progress (promote) personnel through a series of jobs to ensure that people gain the experience that is desired to accomplish specific jobs in the future;

- Provide people with the education and training to complement the experiences they get "on-the-job."

The current model at EPA is to bring employees in straight out of college and move them through the system until retirement. This model, however, may not be able to deliver the age/experience profile EPA needs after a decade of reduced hiring opportunities. This report provides recommendations to help EPA address the management of its human resources to meet the aspirations of its employees while achieving its mission.

II. APPROACH

Three sources of information were utilized in preparing this report:

1. Discussions with EPA human resource program managers
2. Background documents provided by the EPA, particularly the Workforce Assessment Project and Strategy for Human Capital.
3. Briefings by the Comptroller General of the United States, the Office of Personnel Management strategic planning manager, and a representative of the National Academy of Public Administration regarding trends in human resource management in the Federal government

Ultimately, the NACEPT Workforce Capacity Workgroup members used their experience in both the public and private sectors, to develop the observations and recommendations. This report is being submitted at this time to serve as a record of the Council's "real-time" advice and recommendations on the Agency's human resource planning efforts.

The Workgroup's progress was reported to the full NACEPT Council at the November 8-9, 2000 meeting. The draft final recommendations were submitted to the NACEPT Council for review and approval in late February 2001. The Council discussed the recommendations with the EPA program managers during its March 21, 2001 meeting in Washington, D.C.

III. OBSERVATIONS

OARM's original charge was in the form of a specific list of questions which follow together with the observations of the Workgroup and NACEPT Council.

How does the Agency's human resource efforts compare with those considered to be benchmarks in the private/public sector?

- The Agency's human resource efforts do not currently compare very favorably to benchmark organizations in the private sector. The Workforce Assessment develops a view of where the Agency would like to be in 2020, but provides neither a strategy nor a process to transform today's workforce into the desired workforce of the future.
- The Workforce Assessment Project and the EPA: "Strategy for Human Capital" do not include enough quantitative data, e.g. the age/experience distribution within the Agency, data on skills assessments, transferability of skills, etc.

The Strategy Document was too general and lacked tangible goals and goal-directed tangible actions and should include specific direction to the Agency implementation. The document should include measurements for progress toward goals.

EPA should develop a "transformation" plan that defines the specific goals and, more importantly, the specific actions that the Agency needs to take to reach those goals.

NACEPT believes that the Agency is facing a human resource crisis of significant magnitude, yet the materials reviewed did not propose actions necessary to ameliorate the crisis.

One aspect of transformation is career planning and training. The Volcker Commission¹ noted that training was not a strength of the Federal Government. EPA has the opportunity to use training as a significant tool to enhance the management and development of its personnel.

However, this transcends a human resource plan. It represents a significant commitment on the part of the Agency to incur short-term costs and longer-term benefits. Examples of the commitment to training as a part of career development can be found within the Federal government (i.e., DoD's programs for professional education of military officers and senior

The Report of the National Commission on the Public Service and the Task Force Reports to the National Commission on the Public Service. Paul A. Volcker, Chairman (1989): "Leadership for America, Rebuilding the Public Service."

civilians), as well as in such private firms as Merck and Intel.

- NACEPT benchmarked public and private organizations that have quantitative goals and support those goals using robust collection, maintenance, and archiving of human resource data. This data can be used for trends analysis and program assessment.
- NACEPT benchmarked public and private organizations that monitor progress toward goals via employee opinion surveys and similar "soft" measurement processes. A drawback to using such feedback as the sole measuring instrument is that the process can be very subjective and may provide only individual employee perceptions, regardless of whether they are accurate or true.

As general guidance on conducting organizational surveys NACEPT recommends that the Agency be prepared to address any questions or issues that arise from the survey. In advance of conducting a survey, there must be top level commitment to take action on any issues that a survey identifies as a problem (or a perceived problem).

It will be necessary to find ways to answer the "hard" questions. EPA needs to develop measures for tracking progress toward goals, e.g., How do people move through the organization? What are the actual Career Paths? What does it take for an individual to advance?

- Surveys must provide for immediate feedback and response and acknowledgment of the issues from high levels of management. Benchmarked organizations also use such measures to identify issues for deeper examination or "drill-down," and potential strategic planning and implementation. For example:

- Intel: On identifying Management expertise -Intel has 10 years of tracking of their successful managers to help identify determining factors for success. For example, the level of education has a huge impact on individual success versus more "political stuff".

Intel has identified a number of behavioral elements related to the success of its employees. To capitalize on these findings, they developed internal opportunities to enhance the professional growth of their managers. For example, management courses were developed based on the findings of the "Successful Manager" study. One of the "behavioral elements" finds that employees who utilized internal training opportunities were more likely to move up in the organization.

Intel's human resources department has a research budget for collecting and analyzing **data in support of studies such** as the one described above. It maintains a substantial employee data base which helps to identify the qualities, background, and behaviors which correlate to higher levels of success in the organization.

The Department of Defense stores data to identify how people move through the system. It has found that changes in compensation correlate with separations, i.e. people who moved up in the organization and have increased compensation tend to stay longer. Employees in lower salary brackets and those in "dead-end" positions are more likely to leave. Longitudinal files are maintained on individuals which allows analyses on groups/categories based on the historical numbers (not limited by employee responses).

Merck employee surveys utilize a mini-control group/panel to provide more frequent feedback on questions as they arise. This sample group is surveyed by e-mail and results in effectively a 100% response. This sample group is periodically "calibrated" against the total population.

Many organizations in the public and private sectors regularly conduct analyses to link employee data with other stakeholder and/or organizational performance measures and outcomes. For example, several organizations benchmarked attempt to link changes in employee perceptions and satisfaction to changes in employee retention, absenteeism, productivity, and related measures of employee engagement/effectiveness. This allows organizations to assess the success or failure of their human resource programs and initiatives.

How can OARM integrate its strategic planning process with the Agency's strategic plan?

- Human resources strategic planning needs to be an integral part of EPA's overall strategic plan, and the process by which the strategic plan is developed. This begins within the highest levels of management within EPA. If human resource planning is viewed as an add-on process or afterthought, it will not receive the attention or resources necessary to transform today's workforce to the desired workforce of tomorrow.
- Only when Human Resources is integrated into the strategic planning process will the Agency be able to truly identify the necessary **skills** and knowledge needed to fulfill its objectives and reflect the capabilities of EPA's workforce.
- The new Administration has a unique opportunity to fully integrate human resource planning with the overall strategic planning of the Agency. To make a successful case for needing an integrated strategic plan, HR must have data and use statistics to support the issues, e.g. turnover - people leave when they are unhappy with management, training, career development, etc.

Is OARM doing enough in human resource planning to identify appropriate priorities and attain the Agency's human resource goals?

- While the six goals are good concepts, they are general and are applicable to any organization. It is not clear how these goals specifically address the mission of the Agency and/or its strategic goals. For example, Goal 3 states that EPA seeks to be innovative, creative, and risk-taking at all levels of the organization. It is unclear how EPA plans to measure any of these characteristics or to instill them in the workforce. If EPA cannot define, measure, or describe these characteristics, it is impossible to identify appropriate priorities and/or progress towards achieving relevant goals.
- The general concepts and qualities embraced in any goal must be translated into specific measures and outcomes. For example, the Agency has a general goal of achieving and maintaining "clean air," but over time, it has developed specific standards and precise procedures for attaining this goal. Nothing less is required for defining and attaining EPA's human resource plans and goals.

Has EPA allocated the appropriate level of resources to support its human resource development goals (i.e., address program administrator resources, as well as, resources that should be directed toward individual development)?

- It appears that EPA lacks a disciplined human resources planning process, and needs to have a comprehensive approach to human resource development. For example, development of an EPA employee should prepare him/her to serve anywhere in the Agency, and not just the specific program in which he/she is employed. In addition to education, job experience is a critical factor in career development. This could be accomplished through details, developmental assignments, IPA's, and open competition for advancement. It is particularly important to have developmental assignments between and among Regional Offices and Washington headquarters.
- Career development and developmental programs must be reinforced, both in daily work, and in the career/progression planning. For example, the Agency should reinforce career development by requiring broad experience as a prerequisite for advancement to higher managerial positions.
- The commitment for personnel development has to start at the top, as the Administrator strives to relieve the burdened organization of the short-term costs of "giving up" an employee for training or developmental assignments. In other words, trade-off between short-term costs and longer-term benefits be acknowledged at the highest levels of the organization.

How can EPA compete effectively in attracting and retaining talented employees in a job market that offers job seekers multiple choices?

- It is well understood that compensation needs to be competitive, and that EPA needs to be an advocate within the Federal government for competitive salaries that are specific to occupations and geographic locations.
- The Federal government in general, and EPA specifically, has more to offer than just financial remuneration. The Agency needs to emphasize and promote the high calling of public service, the cause of the environment, and the opportunity to work on "big problems" and to make a difference. Nonetheless air compensation cannot be minimized.
- It is clear that EPA has not catalogued or implemented the full range of programs being used by other Federal agencies to attract and retain personnel. Examples of such programs include repaying of student loans, recruitment bonuses, expedited hiring practices, expanded internships for new hires, and phased retirement for career employees. Such programs, once initiated, should be a continuing part of EPA's HR plan.
- EPA should be aggressive in building partnerships with universities, and innovative in the use of Ph.D. research fellowships, grants, and contracts to expose graduate students and faculty to issues related to environmental science and policy. This should include not only financial support, but also access to the Agency, its data, and its resources.
- Creating awareness of and interest in the environment should start early. EPA should continue to promote environmental awareness and career opportunities as early as elementary school.
- Given the projected crisis of early retirement and loss of institutional knowledge, a target population for increased retention should be those already employed by the Agency. If, in years past, it was appropriate to *offer* "early out" bonuses to trim the workforce, it might be appropriate to offer retention bonuses to employees who are eligible to retire, but who agree to continue their employment. This could be offered on a selective basis.

This does need to be more expensive to the Federal government although it could represent increased cost to the EPA. This is because pension costs are not borne by the Agency. The advantage of such a program would be the maintenance of institutional knowledge, as well as an opportunity to transfer that knowledge to more junior staff, and a more orderly transition to a future workforce. It would also reduce the requirement for new hires and training in the immediate future.

NACEPT commends EPA for undertaking the human resource planning effort, and believes that it is a productive approach for the Agency.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

NACEPT endorses the concept of human resource planning, both as a means of meeting the internal needs of employees, and in order to fulfill the mission of the Agency. The following recommendations are made to assist EPA in developing and implementing a comprehensive human resource plan and continuing planning process, recognizing that both the plan and the process must be fully integrated into the Agency's strategic planning process.

- **EPA should continue the human resource planning process** that began with the Workforce Assessment Project and the EPA Strategy for Human Capital, and the original tasks (i.e., Task 5: create a workforce development strategy for recruitment and retention, and Task 6: integrate human resource planning and EPA's strategic planning) should be funded and completed.
- **The plan should incorporate more quantitative information, with attention devoted to measures that will allow the Agency to develop and assess progress toward tangible goals.**
- **A "transformation" plan should be developed** that defines the specific goals and, more importantly, the specific actions that the Agency needs to take to reach those goals.
- **EPA must address its workforce crisis and identify actions necessary to ameliorate the crisis.**
- **EPA must address career planning and training.** This will represent a significant commitment on the part of the Agency to incur short-term costs for longer-term benefits.
- **EPA should collect, maintain, and archive human resource data that is used for trends analysis and program assessment, in support of the human resource plan and planning process.** This should include use of longitudinal files on individuals, a "mini-control group/panel," etc., so that linkages among employee perceptions, career development, and retention/longevity may be established and understood.
- **EPA should use employee opinion surveys and similar "soft" measures on a continuing basis to track employee perceptions,** as well as the Agency's progress in meeting the needs and aspirations of its employees. Many of EPA's human resource goals and challenges center on issues that do not lend themselves to "hard" or objective measurement.
- **EPA must fully integrate its human resource planning into the Agency's overall strategic planning process,** so that there is full coordination between the funding, development, and implementation of human resource programs, and the development of the Agency's strategic goals and objectives. This will require significant support from the Administrator and the Agency's senior leadership.

- **EPA must design and sustain a career development program that emphasizes both formal training and broad experiential assignments as a prerequisite to employee advancement.** Commitment to such a program starts with the Administrator supporting the concept of career development as an Agency-wide priority. This entails trade-offs between short-term costs and longer-term benefits that must be managed at the highest levels of the organization.
- **EPA should be aggressive in all of its programs to attract and retain the required personnel to achieve its mission.** The Agency needs to be an advocate for competitive salaries that are specific to occupations and geographic locations.
 - EPA should emphasize and build upon the high calling of public service, the cause of the environment, and the opportunity for employees to work on "big problems" and to make a difference.
 - EPA should catalogue the full range of programs being used by other Federal agencies. Specifically, it should expand its partnerships with universities, and be innovative in the use of fellowships, grants, and contracts to expose graduate students and faculty to issues related to environmental science *and* policy. Building awareness of environmental issues should start as early as elementary school.
- **EPA should take the lead within the Federal government in managing the upcoming retirement crisis, so that institutional knowledge is maintained and transferred to more junior staff.** Rather than being passive, the Agency should be proactive in developing programs to counter early retirements, such as a retention bonus for critical personnel. EPA also should be innovative in creating new ways to engage former employees, such as phased retirements.

ATTACHMENT A

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Dates&Location

September 2000
(Full Council Planning Meeting)

Washington, DC

November 8-9, 2000
(Full Council Meeting)

Alexandria, Virginia

February 21-22, 2001
(Workgroup Planning Meeting)

Tampa, Florida

March 21, 2001
(Full Council Meeting)

-

Washington, DC

ATTACHMENT B

Members of the NACEPT Workforce Capacity Workgroup

(The following individuals are also members of the NACEPT Council)

Chair: Ms. Dorothy Bowers

Merck & Co., Inc.
One Merck Drive
Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889-0100

Ms. Carrolle Rushford

Rushford & Associates
615 South Xenon Court
Lakewood, CO 80228-2820

Dr. Randall Brandt

Senior Vice President, Integrated Services
Burke, Inc.
805 Central Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Mr. Ned Sullivan

Executive Director
Scenic Hudson, Inc.
9 Vassar Street
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

Ms. Kirby Dyess

Vice President/Director of Intel Capital
Intel Corporation, JF3-151
2111 N.E. 25th Avenue
Hillsboro, OR 97124-5961

Ms. Anita R. Hanson,

Designated Federal *Officer*, NACEPT Workforce
Capacity **Workgroup**
Office of **Cooperative**
Environmental Management
U.S. **Environmental** Protection Agency
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Grover Hankins

Professor of Law; Director of the Environmental
Justice Clinic
Thurgood Marshall School of Law
Texas Southern University
3100 Cleburne
Houston, TX 77004

Ms. Gwendolyn C.L. Whitt

Designated Federal Officer, NACEPT
Office of Cooperative
Environmental Management
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington, D.C.

Dr. Charles Kidd

President, York College
The City University of New York
94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd.
Jamaica, NY 11451

Dr. Marc Rogoff

Vice President, HDR Engineering, Inc.
2202 North Westshore Blvd., Suite 250
Tampa, FL 33607

Dr. Bernard Rostker

Senior Associate
RAND Corporation
1200 South Hayes St.
Arlington, VA 22202-5050

ATTACHMENT C

Charge to the National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology

EPA's Strategic Planning for Meeting Human Resource Needs

The Office of Administration and Resources Management (OARM) has developed EPA's Strategy for Human Capital: FY 2001 through FY 2003 which provides a fundamental direction for the management of the Agency's workforce. It serves as the basis for the development of Agency-wide annual plans and for the allocation of resources to support OARM's overall priorities, which include:

- Succession planning;
- Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce with the competencies necessary to meet the changing demands of the Agency's mission;
- Enabling employees to perform to their highest potential to achieve the Agency's mission;
- Simplifying and streamlining processes to provide superior customer service as well as to keep up with the challenges facing the Agency in the future; and
- Aligning management and planning systems to support employees in achieving the Agency's mission.

OARM is in the second year of implementing the Workforce Development Strategy, ensuring that employees develop and maintain the skills and competencies needed to meet current and future challenges. It recognizes that different workforce skills will be needed in the future, as well as personnel with multiple disciplinary backgrounds and the ability to communicate more effectively with the public in a multilingual and multi-cultural society.

Therefore, EPA is requesting the NACEPT to assess these efforts and related initiatives, and help the Agency to focus its strategic planning for human resource development in the right direction. In particular, EPA is interested in receiving advice on the following questions:

How does the Agency's human resource efforts compare to those considered to be benchmarks in the private sector?

- Using the Workforce Assessment Project and Strategy for Human Capital, workgroup should look first at what is happening within their own organizations that is similar and provide examples or resources to explore for benchmarks in private industry.

- How can OARM integrate its strategic planning process with the Agency's strategic plan?

Process identification for integrating the OARM's and the Agency's strategic planning processes.

Is OARM doing enough in human resource planning to identify appropriate priorities and attain the Agency's human resources goals?

Based on a review of the Workforce Assessment Project and the Strategy for Human Resource documents.

- Has EPA allocated the appropriate level of resources to support its human resource development goals (i.e., address program administration resources, as well as, resources that should be directed toward individual development)?

Council members should general comparisons of percentage of expenditures dedicated to human resource development in their current or past organizations.

- How can EPA compete effectively in attracting and retaining talented employees in a job market that offers job seekers multiple choices?